

ICU ANGEL

by Laurin Bellg, MD



In our three-hundred-bed Midwest hospital, the Intensive Care Unit typically receives trauma victims from all kinds of accidents. However, two winters ago, injured family members from a very bad automobile accident were rushed to our hospital. Their car had hit a patch of black ice and had run off the road while returning home from an evening event. The driver of the car was not speeding, no one was intoxicated, and the children had all been safely buckled in. It was just a freak accident, a freak encounter with black ice. But, all three children, two boys and a girl, were killed. The father, also the driver of the car, was hospitalized with minor injuries. The mother, in critical condition, was transferred to our ICU.

Our telemetry center monitors the data of each ICU patient, and their video screens display what is happening in each room. The telemetry technician, also a nurse, is responsible for monitoring patient data and observing everything that occurs. After this mother was transferred to our ICU, the telemetry tech noticed something unusual on her room's monitor screen around 1:00 in the morning. She saw a little boy wearing a baseball cap standing next to the nurse who was working in her room.

So the tech spoke to the nurse over the intercom, "There's a little boy in there with you." The nurse in the room looked around and replied, "No, I'm in here by myself; it's just me and the patient."

Then another nurse walked up to the telemetry center and also saw the little boy with a baseball cap on the screen. More than a little puzzled, one of these nurses went quickly into the patient's room, only a few yards away. Sure enough, no little boy could be found. The nurse caring for the patient, also dumbfounded, had not seen the little boy in the room either.

As soon as both nurses returned to the telemetry center, they could see the little boy on the monitor.

So other nurses and staff started to gather inside the telemetry center and witness this mystifying event. Over a period of the next six hours up until the shift change occurred that morning, the little boy disappeared and reappeared on the monitor screen about half a dozen times. Sometimes, even when the nurse went into another room to care for a different patient, the little boy stuck by her side and followed her.

Shortly after this incident began, the nurses heard from a respiratory therapist who had helped in the emergency room after the ambulances arrived with this family. All three children had been pronounced dead upon arrival; one of boys killed in the accident had been wearing a baseball cap.

So naturally, the nurses started to wonder, “Is this the ghost of the little boy who’s watching the nurse take care of his mother?”

So it became poignant; it became sweet; it became fascinating. Five nurses – some of them very skeptical, non-believers and non-embellishers – were able to see the boy on the monitor but not in the room. I know one of the first nurses who saw the little boy quite well; she is a huge skeptic of anything that she cannot see with her own eyes. She’s a no-nonsense nurse who is all about trauma and no fluff. I’ve known her for years, and she’d be the first one to say that ghosts don’t exist. However, she was also one of the first nurses to see the boy that night. And, rather than thinking of this child as a ghost, I prefer to think of him as an angel – a sweet, little boy angel looking after his mom at a time she needed him most.

This story was published in 2012 as part of a collection in a book titled Our Children Live On: Miraculous Moments for the Bereaved by Elissa Al-Chokhachy, a hospice nurse and author of many such collections of inspiring stories of how the soul survives. Her book is available on Amazon.